



National Headquarters

April 30, 2002

Eileen Simoes  
US Agency for International Development  
Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance  
Room 8.06  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20523

Subject: Award Number HAD-G-00-02-00062-00  
Community Disaster Preparedness, Education and Mitigation Project

Dear Ms. Simoes:

The American Red Cross is pleased to submit the quarterly report for the above-mentioned grant. This report covers the period of January 1 to March 31, 2002.

Please feel free to contact me at 202-639-3441 or the American Red Cross Disaster Planning and Preparedness Delegate to the Caribbean Region, Ms. Barbara Gay, for any questions regarding this report or the project. Ms. Gay can be reached by electronic mail at [ifrcdr05@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcdr05@ifrc.org) or by phone in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic at country code 809, 567-3344.

Sincerely,

Ellen Tasikas  
Desk Officer for Caribbean Region  
International Relief and Development Unit

Cc: Tonna Marie Surgeon

# **COMMUNITY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, EDUCATION AND MITIGATION Project (CDPEM)**

## **Quarterly Report III**

**Period covered: January 1 – March 31, 2002**

### **I. Introduction**

#### Project Background

Disasters, as localized events, leave the most-affected populations the first to respond. The stronger a community can be in terms of disaster preparedness, the more potential losses can be reduced, a quicker and effective response will take place, and the quicker the recovery to normality. To strengthen preparedness at the local level, strengthening of inter-agency coordination and increasing public awareness must take place – at the local level.

The need for improved coordination among disaster response and recovery organizations is clear. Throughout the Caribbean region, numerous governmental agencies, international and local NGOs, and other organizations prepare for and respond to natural disasters. A region that experiences many disasters each year, its history shows that inter-agency collaboration, specifically at the local level, is weak. The problems created by this weakness include duplication of resources, insufficient assistance to priority needs, needy families “falling through the cracks”, and long-term recovery issues not adequately addressed.

Public awareness increases preparedness, reduces losses and provides for quicker recovery after a disaster. The better a community can be organized before a disaster, the more that citizens know what to do in the face of a disaster, and the better prepared families are for disasters, losses of life and property can be reduced and recovery will be quicker.

American Red Cross is implementing the Community Disaster Preparedness, Education and Mitigation (CDPEM) Project with funding from the Office of U. S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). This one-year project is programmed from July 17, 2001 to June 15, 2002. This is a pilot project, with activities being carried out in 3 countries in the Caribbean region – Belize, Dominica and Guyana. Two communities in each country were initially targeted for project implementation, for a total of 6 communities. However, due to the small populations of target communities in Guyana, and the proximity of highly vulnerable communities in one target area of Belize, the total number of communities in CDPEM is 19.

#### Goal of Project

*The goal of the CDPEM Project is:* To increase disaster preparedness capacity of vulnerable communities through enhanced coordination of local emergency preparedness and response organizations and increased public awareness at the community level.

### *Main Activities:*

- ◆ Formation of Community Disaster Preparedness Committees in target communities.
- ◆ Training of Committees (mentioned above) in vulnerability assessment and disaster planning for their communities.
- ◆ Implementation of public awareness campaigns at the local level with coordinated involvement from disaster response and recovery organizations.
- ◆ Construction of document on successful community level preparedness activities; dissemination of document to target communities and pertinent organizations.

### Project Implementation

The CDPEM Project is being coordinated by the American Red Cross Disaster Planning and Preparedness (DPP) Delegate in the Caribbean Region, Barbara Gay. Based in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Ms. Gay is American Red Cross staff on loan (approximately 60% of her time) to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent; the remaining 40% of her time is dedicated to the CDPEM project. Ms. Gay has extensive experience working as an emergency program manager in Latin America and the Caribbean. She most recently developed and supervised the implementation of emergency response, preparedness, and mitigation and rehabilitation projects in Central America following Hurricane Mitch.

Implementation of the CDPEM project is detailed in the project proposal, with additional information following. Though the three countries in this project are in the same geographic region, are highly vulnerable to natural disasters, and have a history of experience in disaster response and recovery, they are different from one another in significant ways. The CDPEM Project is directly implemented by the national Red Cross society (National Society) in each country, which vary in size and capacity (i.e. number of paid staff, number of volunteers, and reach within the country). The vulnerabilities to disasters are different also; Belize is most vulnerable to hurricanes and flooding; Dominica is vulnerable to hurricanes and landslides; Guyana is most vulnerable to flooding. Because of these differences, some activities in the project vary slightly between countries but all are working toward the same goal and main objective. Variations include different emphases on activities and variation in timelines for implementation.

### Implementing Partners - Background

#### 1. Belize

Mrs. Angelita Magana is the disaster preparedness coordinator and Marylee Ellis, Deputy Director General of the Belize Red Cross Society, (BRCS) is the overall coordinator. The BRCS' main office is in Belize City.

The BRCS has a team of volunteers trained to act in disaster situations and other kinds of emergencies, and is an essential support to the public authorities in this field. In 1998, a disaster management committee was established. A community based disaster preparedness program was implemented by the BRCS in over 80 communities from 1998 to 2000. The

communities that were selected to participate in this program are in the northern districts, vulnerable to flooding as experienced during Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and Keith in 2000.

## 2. Dominica

Kathleen J. Pinard-Byrne, Director General of the Dominica Red Cross Society, (DRCS) is overall responsible for this project in Dominica, while Sandra Charter-Rolle serves as the DP Coordinator and is responsible for the day to day activities.

The DRCS works with several government ministries especially during times of disaster. It has been designated by the government as the primary agency for first-aid instruction on the island, providing training to health personnel, police and special services units. As a member of the national emergency planning organization, the society has been assigned responsibilities in the national disaster plan in the areas of first aid, welfare, relief distribution and international tracing.

With its national role in disaster management, the DRCS focuses on training volunteers, government personnel and members of the public with an emphasis on community preparedness. Due to its highly regarded reputation and past results, the DRCS has recently secured funding from an international donor to implement training components of a disaster preparedness program in the country.

## 3. Guyana

Dorothy Fraser, Secretary General of the Guyana Red Cross, (GRC) is responsible for project activities in Guyana. Most of the inhabitants of Guyana live along the coastal plain or near the capital city, Georgetown. In recent times, Guyana's most common disasters have resulted from an inadequate sea defense. The society has contributed to the national disaster plan and works with the civil defense commission in disaster preparedness training; it is recognized as a leading NGO during times of disaster.

## II. Progress During Reporting Period (January 1 – March 31, 2002)

*Objective #1: (this project contains only one objective)*

*To increase public awareness through campaigns and materials created by representatives of coordinating organizations in each pilot country. These campaigns will work to increase knowledge of simple mitigation measures that can be used at the community level.*

### Progress vis-a-vis Objective #1

#### **Administration, Management and Finance**

- Formal Memorandums of Understanding were signed between American Red Cross and each of the three National Societies (implementing partners). *[Copies of these MOUs are attached to this report.]*
- Budgets were approved by ARC for each National Society (breakdown of approved overall Program budget)

- Program management structure within ARC was changed to be managed by the International Relief and Development Unit, still within the International Services Department
- ARC (International Relief and Development Unit) hired an Operations Associate to be responsible for financial management and grant compliance
- Bank accounts for the Program were established in each National Society
- First disbursement of funds to each National Society from ARC was arranged
- Project coordinators were designated or hired in each National Society
- The Guyana Red Cross has established a volunteer advisory body to the National Society disaster committee and is made up of representatives from government agencies and local non-governmental organizations

### **Planning**

- ARC Program Coordinator visited each National Society to meet with Program staff and to finalize timelines, implementation planning, and National Society budgets
- Action plans (timelines) were finalized and approved by ARC for each National Society
- Communities were identified in each National Society (Belize: 3; Dominica: 2; Guyana: 2 regions; groupings of 7 small villages make up the regions)
- Community profiles were prepared for each community

### **Community contacts**

- Initial meetings with communities:
  - Belize:
    - Key contact persons have been identified in each community and community meetings are scheduled for the next quarter
  - Dominica:
    - District Development Officers (government staff and community liaison in this Program) met with both communities' Disaster Committees and introduced Program objectives and activities
  - Guyana:
    - Initial meetings were held with the National Disaster Committee in Canegrove region and with Village Captains of all 7 communities in the Rupununi region

### **Training**

#### **Belize:**

- Purchased materials, for facilitators and participants, for training sessions planned for subsequent quarter

#### **Dominica:**

- Training topics selected for courses on Community Based Disaster Preparedness and Family Disaster Plans
- Facilitators' training material was prepared

#### **Guyana:**

- Reviewed and selected resource material to use in trainings
- Commenced preparation of DP training material
- Identified 5 DP Facilitators within Guyana Red Cross
- Training venues selected

## **Public Awareness Campaigns**

Belize:

- No activities were planned during this reporting period

Dominica:

- Met with graphic designers to begin drafting public awareness materials on various hazards

Guyana:

- Drafted two brochures on disaster preparedness

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- A 2-day Monitoring and Evaluation workshop was held; participants included the Program Coordinator, M&E Specialist from ARC and representatives from each National Society. Results of the workshop include:
  - Development of 22-question format for baseline and final survey
  - Program indicators defined
  - Results framework created
  - Training of National Societies in survey implementation
- Baseline survey implementation:
  - Belize:
    - Compiled list of heads of household in the 3 communities (to be used in random sample to complete the baseline surveys)
    - Survey implementation is programmed for subsequent quarter
  - Dominica:
    - District Development Officers (2, one in each community) were trained in conducting the survey
    - Baseline surveys were completed in each community
  - Guyana:
    - Three National Society personnel/volunteers were trained in how to conduct the baseline survey
    - Baseline surveys were completed in one region (Rupununi) and are programmed in Canegrove region during subsequent quarter

## Country Updates - Project Activities

### **1. Belize**

Initially, the Belize Red Cross planned to implement project activities in 2 communities in the Stann Creek District, which was severely impacted by Hurricane Iris that made landfall on October 8, 2001. After further discussion with the 18-member Red Cross Disaster Management Committee and the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), it was decided to change to three communities in the northern part of the country. These are San Roman in Orangetown District, and San Pedrito and San Pablo in Belize District. All are vulnerable to seasonal flooding, fire, and tropical weather systems.

San Roman is located on the Rio Hondo, which marks the boarder between Belize and Mexico. This community is covered by the Orangewalk Branch of the National Society. Run by volunteers, the branch maintains a small office space and vehicle in Orange Walk. Following Hurricane Keith in 2000, the branch conducted food distributions and assisted in a latrine rehabilitation project in the community.

San Roman has approximately 103 families, primarily of Maya and Spanish speaking descent. Most people in San Roman work as day laborers in the sugar cane fields from December to June, and are unemployed the rest of the year. There are few services in the area and much of the population could be categorized as low-income or poverty level subsistence.

Both San Pedrito and San Pablo are located in Ambergris Cay, a popular tourist destination. The San Pedro Branch is made up of a few core volunteers and does not have office space or a vehicle.

San Pedrito and San Pablo are home to 118 and 66 families respectively, and predominantly speak Spanish. The majority of the families that live in these communities work in services in the tourist industry or in the construction industry, having migrated to the area in pursuit of work opportunities. Because this is a tourist destination and is only accessible by boat or air, basic services such as transportation, food, and housing are very costly.

San Pedrito and San Pablo are newly formed communities located on reclaimed swamp land that is being filled in with garbage and eventually will be covered with sand. Basic services are just arriving in these communities, the result of a new government housing project in a nearby area. Transportation on the Cay is usually by bike, taxi, or golf cart (roads are compacted sand).

## 2. Dominica

After discussions were held with the District Development Officers (DDOs) on this Program, the communities of Paix Bouche and Bagatelle were selected and profiles were drawn up. Subsequent meetings were held with the DDOs to discuss Program implementation and to train on conducting the baseline surveys. The baseline survey was subsequently conducted having a total of 38 questionnaires completed, 19 in each region. The National Society met with Disaster Committee members in each community on the Program and both communities are interested in program implementation.

## 3. Guyana

Of the five communities that were originally considered, two regions with seven villages each were decided on. The regions are: Cane Grove, about an hour drive from Georgetown and National Society headquarters, and South Central Rupununi in the western side of Guyana. Transportation to this area can be difficult in the rainy season, when the normal 8-

hour drive may take much longer. There are flights available into the region; the Lethem airstrip is about 2 hours by vehicle from the villages.

In both the Cane Grove and South Central Rupununi, sessions were held with the village members who have not only agreed on participating in the Program, but have expressed excitement at working on the Program.

#### 4. American Red Cross

Program management, originally within the International Disaster Response Unit (IDRU) of the International Services Department, has been put under the International Relief and Development Unit (IRD) in the same department. The IDRU normally handles disaster responses for a period of up to 3 months, while the IRD manages longer-term programming. The IRD will provide stronger support in administrative and financial issues and grant compliance as well.

#### Problems Encountered

In accordance with American Red Cross policy, the Memorandum of Understanding need to be signed before a funds transfer can take place. The MOUs were signed in mid-March, and by the end of the reporting period, the funds transfers were all being arranged. Some minor delays and difficulties were experienced due to lack of funds at the National Society level.

Belize revised their timeline of activities in February due to commitments to completing Hurricane Iris rehabilitation activities. Substantive Program activities are now programmed to begin in April.

### **III. Plans for Next Reporting Period**

The subsequent reporting period will include the completion of community trainings, hazard mapping, vulnerability and capacity assessments, full community meetings on the Program, and family disaster plan training. Public awareness materials will be drafted in each country also.

Last period's report stated that a revised program timeline would be submitted with the present report. However, American Red Cross will be submitting a proposal for a cost extension to this Program, which will be submitted by May 6, 2002. This proposal will include the revised Program timeline.

END